

# Everybody Needs a Rock

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*Illustrated by Valerie Sinclair*



Everybody  
needs  
a rock.

I'm sorry for kids  
who don't have  
a rock  
for a friend.

I'm sorry for kids  
who only have  
TRICYCLES  
BICYCLES  
HORSES  
ELEPHANTS  
GOLDFISH  
THREE-ROOM PLAYHOUSES  
FIRE ENGINES  
WIND-UP DRAGONS  
AND THINGS LIKE THAT—  
if  
they don't have  
a  
rock  
for a friend.



That's why  
I'm giving them  
my own  
TEN RULES  
for  
finding  
a  
rock. . . .

Not  
just  
any rock.  
I mean  
a  
special  
rock  
that you find  
yourself  
and keep  
as long as  
you can—  
maybe  
forever.

If somebody says,  
"What's so special  
about that rock?"  
don't even tell them.  
I don't.

Nobody  
is supposed  
to know  
what's special  
about  
another person's  
rock.

All right.  
Here  
are  
the  
rules:







RULE NUMBER 1

If you can,  
go to a mountain  
made out of  
nothing but  
a hundred million  
small  
shiny  
beautiful  
roundish  
rocks.

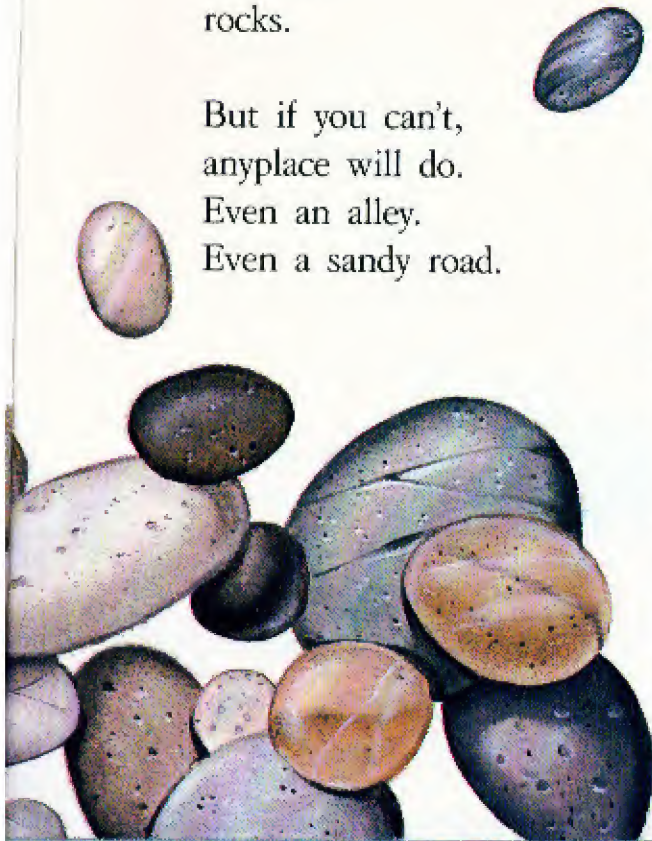
But if you can't,  
anyplace will do.  
Even an alley.  
Even a sandy road.



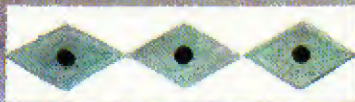
RULE NUMBER 2

When you are looking  
at rocks  
don't let  
mothers or fathers  
or sisters or brothers  
or even best friends  
talk  
to you.  
You should choose  
a rock  
when everything  
is quiet.  
Don't let dogs bark  
at you  
or bees buzz  
at you.

But if they do,  
DON'T WORRY.  
(The worst thing you can do is go  
rock hunting when you are worried.)







RULE NUMBER 3

Bend over.  
 More.  
 Even more.  
 You may have to sit  
 on the ground  
 with your head  
 almost  
 touching  
 the earth.  
 You have to look  
 a rock  
 right  
 in the eye.

Otherwise,  
 don't blame me  
 if you  
 can't find  
 a good one.



RULE NUMBER 4

Don't get a rock  
 that is  
 too big.  
 You'll  
 always  
 be sorry.  
 It won't fit  
 your hand  
 right  
 and it won't fit  
 your pocket.

A rock as big as  
 an apple  
 is too big.  
 A rock as big as  
 a horse  
 is  
 MUCH  
 too big.



RULE NUMBER 5

Don't choose a rock  
 that is  
 too small.  
 It will only be  
 easy  
 to lose  
 or  
 a mouse  
 might eat it,  
 thinking  
 that it  
 is a seed.



(Believe me,  
 that happened  
 to a boy  
 in the state  
 of Arizona.)



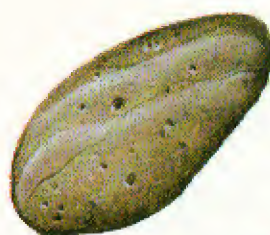




RULE NUMBER 6

The size  
must be  
perfect.  
It has to feel  
easy  
in your hand  
when you close  
your fingers  
over it.  
It has to feel  
jumpy  
in your pocket  
when you run.

Some people  
touch  
a rock  
a thousand times  
a day.  
There aren't many things  
that feel  
as good as a rock—  
if the rock  
is  
perfect.







RULE NUMBER 7

Look for  
the perfect  
color.  
That could be  
a sort of  
pinkish gray  
with bits of  
silvery shine in it.  
Some rocks  
that look brown  
are really other  
colors,  
but  
you only see them  
when you squint  
and when the sun  
is right.

Another way  
to see colors  
is to dip  
your rock  
in a clear mountain stream—  
if one is passing by.



RULE NUMBER 8

The shape  
of the rock  
is up to you.  
(There is a girl in Alaska  
who only likes flat rocks.  
Don't ask me why.  
I like them lumpy.)





The thing to remember  
about shapes  
is this:  
Any rock  
looks good  
with a hundred other rocks  
around it on a hill.  
But  
if your rock  
is going to be special  
it should look good  
by itself  
in the bathtub.



RULE NUMBER 9

Always  
sniff  
a rock.  
Rocks have  
their own smells.  
Some kids can tell  
by sniffing  
whether a rock  
came from the middle  
of the earth  
or from an ocean  
or from a mountain  
where wind and sun  
touched it  
every day  
for a million years.

You'll find out that grown-ups  
can't tell these things.  
Too bad for them.  
They just can't smell as well  
as kids can.





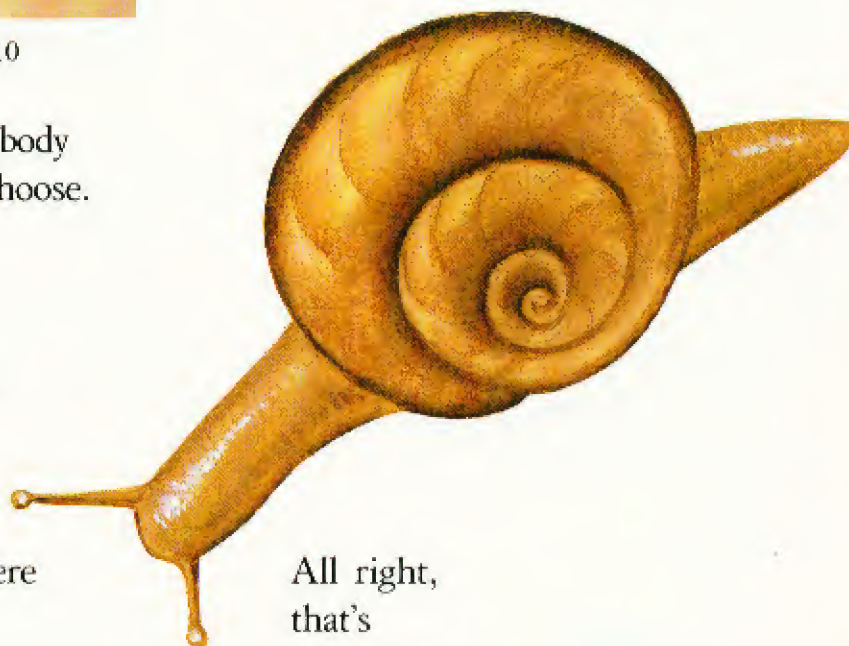
RULE NUMBER 10

Don't ask anybody  
to help you choose.

I've seen  
a lizard  
pick one rock  
out of  
a desert full  
of rocks  
and go sit there  
alone.

I've seen  
a snail  
pass up  
twenty rocks  
and spend all day  
getting to  
the one  
it wanted.

You have to  
make up  
your own mind.  
You'll  
*know*.



All right,  
that's  
ten rules.  
If you think  
of any more  
write them down  
yourself.  
I'm going out  
to play a game  
that takes  
just me  
and one rock  
to play.

I happen to have  
a rock here in my hand. . . .

